

**Application to the State of Maine for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science in
Entertainment Production**

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A. Organization and Governance of NESCom

1. The Institution has a current written document detailing administrative responsibilities of the governing board, administrators, the faculty, the staff and the students (if staff and students participate in institutional governance).

The New England School of Communications (“NESCom”) is a not-for-profit Maine corporation that is wholly owned by Husson University. The two institutions share the same campus in Bangor but each grants its own degrees. Each is accredited: NESCom by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) and Husson by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Each has own student body and each its own administration. NESCom is governed by its nine member Board of Directors. These directors also serve as part of the Board of Trustees of Husson University. A copy of NESCom’s corporate by-laws is attached as Attachment A. The NESCom Board of Directors bears the authority for governance. According to the by-laws, the Board exercises its authority by:

- ☐ Appointing officers
- ☐ Approving the budget
- ☐ Setting tuition and fees
- ☐ Adding, eliminating or modifying academic programs, degrees and concentrations
- ☐ Selling or leasing assets
- ☐ Borrowing funds

Appointing of officers and approving the budget are affirmed by the Husson Board of Trustees.

The Administration of NESCom

The senior administrative team of NESCom consists of the President, Dean of Academic Programs, Dean of the School, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement/Registrar and Business and Accounting Manager. Individuals appointed to serve in these positions are responsible for running the daily affairs of the School. The President reports to the Chief Executive Officer of NESCom (who is also President of Husson University) and the Business and Accounting Manager reports to the Treasurer (who is also the Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer of Husson University). The CEO and the President attend meetings of the NESCom Board of Directors and the Husson University Board of Trustees. The senior administrative team members acquire and analyze information, make and communicate decisions, and assess results and feedback. The senior administrative team insures that the School is in compliance with accrediting standards, meets its objectives and fulfills its obligations to students.

Faculty

The faculty of NESCom bear the direct responsibility for the education and advising of students. In the fundamental and important role of instructing, faculty apply pedagogical techniques to their fields of expertise in the instruction of students.

They develop syllabi, lesson plans, materials, demonstrations, experiential exercises, tests, written and media assignments and other means to deliver and assess student learning in classroom and laboratory settings. They also initiate and participate in events and projects outside the classroom in support of the academic program.

Faculty confer with individual students to discuss their coursework. As part of their responsibility, each faculty member must maintain and improve competency in the subjects being taught and in their pedagogy. At various times, full time faculty will attend meetings, serve on committees, be involved with planning, assist in recruiting, retaining and placing students, and engage in community outreach. Technical faculty will install, acquire competency, operate and repair equipment and facilities.

Full-time faculty are assigned to serve as advisors for a group of students. At least once each semester, faculty meet individually with students to review and advise regarding course selections, progress towards graduation, and career direction. At times students will seek personal advice from faculty, which may result in a referral for services, including tutoring and counseling services on campus.

2. The institution has an organizational chart that clearly shows lines of authority and the relationship among component units and personnel.

Please see Attachment B for an Organizational Chart of NESCom that highlights the relationship among the departments, functions and personnel.

B. Institutional Objectives

1. The institution has defined its educational mission and general purposes or goals and has included within its “statement of purpose” such uniqueness of programming and educational philosophy as may be inherent in the proposed degree offerings.

The New England School of Communications has defined its statement of purpose in its Mission Statement and in its Core Values. The Mission Statement provides:

The New England School of Communications prepares students for careers in the broad field of communications. We educate students in the applied technology of and content consistent with the platforms that they will be using in their professions. Our instruction is designed to give students not only the critical knowledge but also the technical skills they will need to be successful in their chosen careers. The core values of NESCom are:

□ **CareerFocused**

Career preparation is a primary focus to better prepare our students for the first day of work.

□ **TechnologyBased**

Technology is of extreme importance in the communications industry and we strive to train students with equipment and software that is currently in use.

□ **Work Ethic** *A strong work ethic and sense of humility are important characteristics that will help our students to be successful in the work force.*

□ **Broadbased**

Learning *Educating our students across a variety of media platforms broadens students' abilities and allows them a wider range of future opportunities.*

□ **Life Skills** *Creativity and problem solving capabilities, crucial in our college environment and in the communications industry, are taught and modeled by faculty.*

□ **Practical Experience** *Students are offered early and frequent opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills learned.*

□ **Value** *Delivering value to our students for the tuition they pay is an obligation our school takes seriously.*

□ **Diversity** *Accepting students from a broad range of academic, economic and cultural backgrounds and giving them a fair opportunity to succeed enriches not only the life of our students but also the college.*

The proposed degree, a Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Production ("BSEP"), fits well with the Mission and Core Values of NESCom. First, the BSEP is designed to educate students for career opportunities that exist in the field of Communications, and in particular, entertainment. It does so by delivering curriculum that focuses on technical knowledge and skills that are needed "behind the scenes", rather than on performance. The objective of this program is to graduate students who can flexibly apply entertainment technology across many venues. These types of entertainment share the need for professionals who understand and can design and operate sound, light, sets, show management control and special effects. There is also a need for graduates who can participate in the management of venues.

Many industries use the design, fabrication and management skill sets formulated by the performing arts. The same design and construction techniques traditionally associated with theatre now are being employed in trade shows, amusement parks, casinos, rock concerts, cruise ships, shopping malls, the fashion industry, museums and exhibitions, television, sports contests, film and video production, and political conventions. Discussions with industry professionals have reinforced a commonality of technique across disciplines. By focusing on what these have in common, we have designed a degree program that serves a broad career sector.

The students in the BSEP program would pursue general education courses to give them exposure to a liberal arts education and to develop intellect at the college level.

The core curriculum acquaints students with the broader field of communications, computer technology and business concepts. The career related requirements and the electives broaden and deepen the student's knowledge and skills in support of entertainment. This structure of courses is designed to provide students with the critical knowledge and technical skills for careers in entertainment production.

2. The institution's "statement of purpose" is readily identifiable through its course and program offerings.

The central focus of the degrees, courses and program offerings of the New England School of Communications is to educate students for viable careers in the field of mass communications, with an emphasis on applied technology. The current degrees offered are a Bachelor of Science in Media Studies ("BSMS") and a Bachelor of Science in Communications Technology ("BSCT").¹ The concentrations of journalism, sports journalism, radio broadcasting and marketing communications that are within the BSMS program focus on the content of information and entertainment communications while using applied technology. The concentrations in BSCT of audio engineering, video production, web media and live sound technology focus on the applied technology and the acquisition and delivery of information and entertainment. The proposal for a BSEP logically combines and extends NESCom's offerings into the closely related field of live productions. For example, vendors in a national trade show use many of these skills to draw attention to their goods and services. Using eye-catching designs, colors and lighting, a vendor creates a kiosk in which a sight and sound experience demonstrates its products. A rock concert is no longer just a live audio event; it is also an extravagant light show with video and special effects. The public now expects this kind of excitement on the traditional stage. To educate students in the design, fabrication and installation, safety and operation of these types of events is the purpose of the proposed BSEP.

C. Degree Requirements

1. The institution awards degrees, only upon successful completion of the course or programs of study, and degree requirements to be met are specified in writing.

The Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Production degree program, as with all of NESCom's degree programs, requires that a student complete a set of requirements

¹ NESCom has recently obtained from the State of Maine authority to divide its Bachelor of Science in Communications into component degrees of BSMS and BSCT. The application for accreditation of these two degrees was approved in May 2010 through ACCSC. in core and career-related courses as well as general education courses. These requirements are part of the college catalog and are set forth in Attachment C.

2. The institution's semester hours requirements for degree completion meeting the minimum requirements.

All students must complete 120 credits, with 72 hours in Entertainment Production core, career-related, and elective classes and 48 hours in general education courses. The curriculum is outlined in Attachment D. The course descriptions can be found in Attachment E.

D. Admission Requirements

1. The institution has a written policy defining the minimum requirement for admissions and for acceptance at the specific degree level or into the specific degree program proposed by the institution, consistent with criteria established by the appropriate regional or nationally recognized specialized accrediting agency.

NESCom's admissions requirements for its current baccalaureate degree programs shall also apply to the BSEP program. Those requirements are stated in the 2009-10 Catalog as shown in Attachment C.

2. The admissions policies include detailed attention to the standards for academic credit given for experience, and the criteria for transfer credit.

The NESCom 2009-10 Catalog specifically addresses the transfer of credits. NESCom does not grant academic credit for experience. This policy applies to all NESCom degree programs, including the proposed BSEP. Please see Attachment C, pages 8 – 9 of the college catalog, which speaks to the transferring of credit. NESCom does not evaluate nor offer academic credit for experience.

3. The institution has a written policy detailing the criteria and procedure to be followed in providing for a refund of tuitions and fees.

The NESCom 2009-10 Catalog specifically addresses the refund of tuition and fees credits. This policy applies to all NESCom degree programs, including the proposed BSEP, and is shown as Attachment C on page 18.

E. Academic Programs

1. The educational program and curriculum reflects the philosophy, purposes and objectives of the institution.

As set forth in our response to section (B)(1) and (2) above, the proposed Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Production reflects the philosophy, purpose and objectives of NESCom. The philosophy, purpose and objectives are stated in NESCom's Mission Statement and Core Values. The proposed degree is clearly

career-focused, based on technology and taught at both theoretical and experiential levels.

2. The institution has a written policy describing its system for evaluating student performance, the minimum performance considered satisfactory, the criteria for academic probation and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory performance.

NESCom has adopted written academic policies that apply to all of its degree programs and would apply to the proposed Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Production. These policies describe a system for evaluating student performance, the minimum performance considered satisfactory, the criteria for academic probation and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory performance. These policies are stated in NESCom's 2009-10 Catalog and are shown in Attachment C on pages 11-16.

3. Procedures for the evaluation of the quality of programs of instruction and specific courses are clearly stated in writing.

Our assessment methods vary from informal to formal and quantitative to qualitative. With small classes and time spent in lab and project settings, our instructors have significant exposure to students' thoughts and opinions and report them to their program directors. On a formal and quantitative level, our students anonymously evaluate their instructors at the end of each semester, from which we learn their opinions of the course as well as the instructor. The informal contact among the senior administration, program directors and instructors, most of whom come from the business sector for which they teach, provide feedback on courses and course content and its relevance to the workplace. During our three faculty meetings and workshops held each year, the sharing of ideas among faculty leads to improved classroom activities, syllabus and lesson plan design, instructional methods, and excitement about working with our students. At NESCom, we view student academic performance as a part of the assessment of our success. Mid-term and end of each semester trends are carefully reviewed and anomalies in student grade point averages that may indicate a need for intervention at a programmatic and/or individual level. We analyze our retention rates and examine the non-retention of individual students, as well as the reasons for their departures.

NESCom students respond to an anonymous electronic evaluation at the end of each semester about each of the courses they have just taken. A copy of the evaluation is attached as Attachment F. We analyze the statistical results and we review the narrative comments. Copies of the results are provided to the department director and course instructor. We address any concerns with the program and/or faculty. In a program such as NESCom's, employment in the field is one of the gold standard measurements of outcome. We carefully monitor and report to ACCSC the statistical success of our graduates in securing employment in their fields. We also make qualitative judgments on the placements based on the employer's reputation in

their industries. In conversations with graduates and employers, we gain information about how our programs match the needs of the communications industries. The placement process is an important feedback opportunity to learn about our students' competencies and industry needs.

From our Program Advisory Committee (PAC), we receive ideas, suggestions, constructive criticism, and employment advice. The all-volunteer PAC consists of employers, some of whom have hired our graduates, who are willing to keep us up-to-date on the changes in the job market as it affects media studies. NESCom's Career Services director has solidified employer contacts in the Bangor area for the concentrations in BSMS and is making a concerted effort to work his way into the Portland, Maine market to make contact with employers who may hire our graduates. These visits to employers serve as an opportunity to learn what they need and what they look for in our graduates. We use this information to assess the relevance of our instruction and to adjust our courses and their content to better reflect industry needs.

Our Curriculum Committee meets at least three times a year to review any proposed new courses, new programs, or substantive changes to existing courses. More information on this committee can be found in section F3. All of these means of gathering statistical and anecdotal information about our programs help us to improve student success. We are able to identify where we need to increase relevance and rigor, and where we need to revise expectations. It helps us assess the performance of our faculty and devise methods for instructional improvements.

4. The institution's programs of study consist of planned educational experiences to meet the stated objectives and include attention to the necessary prerequisites, required courses and appropriate progression.

As set forth in Attachment D, the proposed course of study for the BSEP follows a planned educational experience that combines General Education in the form of a liberal arts experience of 48 credits and technical and occupationally related courses of 72 credits, for a total of 120 credits. The General Education courses include requirements for written and oral communications, quantitative principles, history and government, and social and behavioral sciences. Students also must satisfy a distribution requirement by electing courses in a non-laboratory science, humanities and the fine arts. The purpose of the General Education courses is to provide a broader, college level of education in general knowledge and intellectual study to prepare students for their technical coursework and to gain perspectives beyond their technical interests.

In order to graduate, students are also required to successfully complete 72 credits in technical and occupationally-related courses. Following the outline established for the BSCT and BSMS programs, the proposed BSEP program would set requirements for core (24 credits) and career-related (27 credits) courses and offer technical electives (21 credits).

The core courses represent basic knowledge and skills that are common to technical careers in the broad field of entertainment. The career related courses deepen the technical and artistic understanding of the field. The technical electives offer the student the opportunity to further develop their own skills and knowledge based on their interests. The prerequisites and course numbering reflects increasing complexity and progression in developing a student's education. For instance, the courses that cluster around scenic construction and design require all students to acquire basic knowledge and for those who have a stronger interest, to develop broader and deeper knowledge. Intro to Theater (ENT 111), Worksite, Rigging & Electrical Safety (COM 118) and Computer Applications for Digital Media (COM 121) provide a student with necessary elements that will give context to scenery as part of performance, to safe working practices and safe design, and to the digital background that is shared among technical platforms for design, video, audio, the Web and show control. The hypothetical student with an interest in scenic construction and design would directly benefit from the required career-related courses in Artistic Techniques for Design (ENT 123), Scenic Construction I (ENT 124), Scenic Construction II (ENT 224), Theater/Event/Film Scenic Design (ENT 242) and Computer Aided Drafting/3d Visualization (ENT 321).

Among the electives, this student might choose Scenic Art-Painting and Properties (ENT 223), Graphic Design for Print (MCC 245) and Digital Illustration for Design (MCC 328). To cap this program, the student would bring her/his skills to Group Design (ENT 331) and to Final Portfolio/Proficiency Review (ENT 448). In addition, the student might secure an internship in this field and earn up to 9 academic credits. This hypothetical progression represents a combination of required and elected coursework that would well-prepare a student with skills and knowledge for careers related to scenic design and construction. Similar scenarios within the BSEP curriculum can be created for students with career interests in managing and directing events, event lighting, and event marketing.

F. Faculty

1. The Preponderance of faculty provide instruction and possesses academic, scholarly, and teaching qualifications appropriate to their respective positions and teaching assignments and are distributed in such a way that all students benefit from these qualifications.

In accordance with ACCSC Standards of Accreditation, NESCom faculty teaching technical or occupational courses must have the appropriate academic credentials and related work experience. For the Bachelor of Science degree in Entertainment Production, faculty must have a minimum of four years of related practical work experience in the subject area(s) taught and possess a degree at least at the same level of the course the faculty member is teaching. In exceptional cases, ACCSC Standards allow outstanding professional experience and contributions in the

occupational field, to be substituted for a formal degree. Such a faculty member must be able to show a minimum eight years of related practical work experience.

This experience must be documented by the school on an individual basis. NESCom has three faculty/staff members, who because of outstanding professional experience have been granted a waiver of a formal degree by ACCSC. All other NESCom faculty teaching the technical or occupational courses have documentation on file indicating appropriate academic credentials and work experience. Please see Attachment G for ACCSC Standards regarding faculty credentials.

As required by ACCSC accreditation, NESCom faculty teaching technical courses must have at least a degree equal to the program in which they are teaching. For those NESCom faculty teaching general education courses in the BSEP degree program must have at a minimum a master's degree with appropriate academic coursework and preparation in the subject area(s) taught. All instructors at NESCom have documentation on file indicating the appropriate degree level in the appropriate subject matter.

The two, current full time faculty members who would instruct in the BSEP program are Kenneth Stack (who would be the program director) and Brave Williams. Their curricula vitae are attached as Attachments H and I. Mr. Stack brings extensive directing and producing experience with theater while Mr. Williams brings extensive education and experience in the technical arts related to production of events. The existing faculty in the Live Sound Technology concentration have extensive experience with operation and instruction related to sound and lighting in a variety of venues

2. The faculty is involved with developing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum for all degree programs to assure quality learning experiences are provided for all students.

NESCom faculty members are actively involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the school's curriculum. Each concentration has a Program Director who instructs as well as oversees the instructors in that program. The Program Director and the faculty review courses, course content, texts, learning resources and overall curriculum in their respective concentrations.

Each instructor has primary responsibility for developing the syllabus for each course that she or her teaches. Departmental faculty meetings are held during which curriculum is discussed and faculty observations and opinions are solicited. Input previously provided from industry is incorporated into these discussions as faculty consider curriculum in light of student development for careers in the field. This is particularly true of the occupational courses which need to stay current with technology. NESCom also has established a process and a Curriculum Committee which is described below in the response to (3).

Within the concentrations, NESCom's technical and occupational courses are frequently reviewed. Review is caused by changes in technology, changes in equipment and software used by the School, advice from the Program Advisory Committees and employers, student survey results and through the initiative of departments and individual faculty. Given that NESCom seeks to be current with its technical courses, it teaches general education with an emphasis on relevancy so as to foster a well-rounded learning experience for its students.

3. The faculty participates in the governance of the institution and the academic programs as well as the short-term institutional planning activities.

Faculty participates in the governance of NESCom at several levels. Faculty members serve as program directors of the eight existing concentrations (four in the BSCT and four in the BSMS degrees) and one faculty member would serve as the program director of the BSEP program. These faculty members manage the academic program of, and the faculty assigned to, the concentration. They are part of the NESCom management team that meets weekly to discuss institutional matters and have the ability to place items on the team's agenda. These faculty who serve as program directors also become involved in the faculty hiring process for their concentration by reviewing curricula vitae, taking part in interviews and making recommendations to the appropriate Dean and President. The program directors are involved in the initial preparation of the operating and capital budgets for their concentrations, as well as in some of the discussions for modification of proposals. Program Directors and concentration faculty usually make the ultimate selection decisions in the acquisition of equipment and software within the framework of the budget. NESCom has established a process and a Curriculum Committee to review course additions, changes and deletions. The Request form and the Process are described in detail in Attachment J.

The Strategic Plan developed by NESCom is the result of meetings during the summer of 2008 involving all full-time faculty and staff of NESCom, and then revised during the summer of 2009 by the NESCom management team. During the planning process, faculty were engaged in the creation of the Mission Statement and Core Values cited above. A copy of the Strategic Plan is attached as Attachment K.

The development of the BSEP program has been a cooperative effort among the two faculty who have sought this program (Ken Stack and Brave Williams) and the Dean of the School, Greg Miller. These three individuals have developed the objectives, curriculum, and courses for this program over the past 2 years. The current proposal is a culmination of research, comparisons to other programs, dialogue with representatives of industry, and debate on the merits of various iterations.

G. Student Services

1. Students are provided with and have access to a system of educational, career and personal advising services.

NESCom is committed to providing students with support for their success during their time at college. This support addresses academic development, student life, career services and counseling for emotional and mental health issues.

1. Academic Advising

All NESCom students are assigned an academic advisor. An advisor guides students in their efforts to earn a degree, and in particular, academic progress and the selection of courses. An advisor may also discuss, advise and refer students regarding other matters that a student may wish to discuss. Full-time faculty members maintain posted office hours. Adjunct faculty usually arrive early and stay late after class in order to meet with students and are available by email. Student building monitors, who can assist students with various questions and procedures, are present until the building closes at night. NESCom also has staff available until at least 9:00 p.m. every weeknight.

Students are given access to a Student Portal to view their grades, bills, and unofficial transcripts. Instructors make use of the Portal to support classroom and/or lab time by posting lecture notes and syllabi. In this way, the Portal has become an important means for instructors to communicate with their class in a simple and common format. NESCom students have access to the Academic Learning Center at Husson University. The staff and student tutors in the Academic Learning Center assist with General Education coursework. The most frequently requested services relate to writing, math, and science. On occasion, NESCom students may need academic assistance in a particular course. The Deans or the Registrar's office may assign a peer tutor (a student who has excelled in that particular subject) based on a student's request or a reference by the course instructor. The tutor is paid hourly and the service is free for the student up to \$100 per semester.

For students with documented learning issues, professional "coaches" are available at a cost to assist students with transitional concerns and time management skills. Most recently we have been using educational professionals as individual "coaches" for students with documented learning issues. The Assistant Registrar monitors students' attendance records and initiates contact with students who miss classes (NESCom instructors take attendance and report absences). If a student fails to respond or follow through, the Assistant Registrar may refer the situation to the Executive Director/Registrar or one of the Deans for intervention. The Assistant Registrar or Registrar handles all withdrawals and leaves of absence.

At mid-term, if a student has below a 2.0 term GPA, the student is placed on a watch list, a hold is placed preventing registration, and he/she is required to meet with the

Dean of Academic Programs or the Executive Director/Registrar. They may then design an intervention program to help the student with the problem subject(s) and with other issues. NESCom wants to see students succeed, and by talking with them, we try to ascertain what the issues are with which we can assist. Often, a small issue gets in the way of success and if we can retain the student after their first year, the higher the likelihood that the student will remain and graduate from NESCom. Entering first year students need assistance in the transition to college life and this assistance will also be part of the BSEP program. NESCom requires freshmen to participate in a mid-summer freshmen orientation as well as a first semester "Success Seminar", both of which are designed to help first time freshman adjust to college life. Topics such as study skills, money matters, making friends, roommate issues, time management, and academic policies are covered in these sessions. For students who receive a failing or near failing grade in a class early on, faculty submit Progress Reports to the Dean of the School who follows up with these students on an individual basis. Based on the Dean's assessment, interventions may be developed to assist the student.

2. Student Life

NESCom coordinates with Residential Life at Husson University, housing on campus for a limited number of NESCom students. Many NESCom freshmen live on campus, which provides convenient living and eating accommodations as well as a campus community experience. The rooms in the University dormitories are furnished with beds, bureaus, wardrobe closets, desks and chairs. In addition, rooms are equipped with a telephone jack, wireless Internet, and basic cable for television. Vending machines and a laundromat are also available for resident students.

The Office of Residential Life for Husson University is responsible for the social, recreational, cultural and programming for the campus, the management of resident hall activities and the enforcement of residential policies and procedures. Residential Directors (RDs) and upper class Residential Assistants (RAs) are available 24 hours per day to assist students while semesters are in session. NESCom students share the residence halls with Husson students. A more extensive description of these living arrangements can be found in Attachment L. The University also maintains information about local off-campus apartments as well as schedules and information on the local bus system.

Campus life offers social and other activities for NESCom and Husson students. All students are encouraged to get involved with any one of the many organizations on campus and participate in a variety of special events that take place throughout the year. Joining an organization gives students a sense of belonging, develops team work skills and often provides students with a direct voice in the decision making process that affects student life. Some of the organizations on campus are Student Government, The Spectator (campus newspaper), English Club, Yearbook, Husson University Theatre, Outdoors Club, International Club, Campus Crusade for Christ, Cheerleading, Pep Band, Gaming Club, and Greek Fraternities and Sororities. Student

Activities sponsors numerous recreational and social events as well such as lectures, dance and theatrical performances. NESCom students can also compete in intramural sports, including basketball, volleyball, softball, and soccer.

3. Career Services

The Career Services Office of NESCom assists students in internship and career opportunities. Students in their third or fourth year of study are required to attend a one semester, one-credit Career Preparation course in preparation for the search for employment. This includes the preparation of cover letters and resumes, and skills needed for job interviews. The Director of Career Services works closely with students to find internships, which often become the first step to employment upon graduation.

The Career Services Director works to create contacts and relationships with potential employers. Through personal visits, emails and telephone contact, the Director works to identify potential opportunities and then match students with employers. NESCom has recently developed a video for distribution to employers about the benefits of hiring NESCom graduates. We have also developed a website on which students can post their resumes and other employment related information for employer review.

While securing employment upon graduation remains the responsibility of the student, NESCom provides senior students with individual placement assistance to help identify and apply for specific positions in their field of study. This may involve contact on behalf of the student with a potential employer, coordinating the job interview, and individual help with preparation of cover letters, resumes and portfolios and “demo reels”. The Career Services Office remains available to offer advice and assistance to NESCom alumni. NESCom does not guarantee employment for its graduates.

4. Emotional and Mental Health issues

Husson University has a counseling center available on campus to NESCom students who need assistance with problems that may require professional intervention. Rene Collins, Jayne Thibodeau, and Alex Patel staff the counseling center and they may refer students to other resources and professionals depending on the circumstances. For more information please see Attachment M.

H. Library and Learning Resources

1. The institution maintains and provides ready access to library and learning resources, virtual and/or physical that are adequate and appropriate for student achievement of stated program goals and objectives.

NESCom's learning resource system provides a variety of opportunities for students to learn and includes many of the Student Services described above. The School is located on the campus of Husson University. Most communications related books (approximately 500) and a number of periodicals are catalogued in the Husson University library. NESCom has its own online Wikipedia, which is a closed network information system that students can log into to get information on procedures for using various pieces of equipment, manuals for equipment, and instructions for set-ups. Trade publications and journals are available both in the Husson Library and within the Communication Center. We have approximately 114 computers used by our students, of which 60 are general access; all have Internet access.

Students at NESCom have a large quantity of reference books and related materials at hand to support their learning. The Husson University library houses over 41,000 volumes in many categories. As it relates to NESCom, students have total access to all library resources. Improvement and growth of the Learning Resource System is a joint, on-going process between NESCom and Husson University. Husson's annual operating budget for its library system is roughly \$375,000. NESCom allocates approximately \$200, 000 to its Learning Resources System (computers, periodicals, services, books).

Use of the campus library as a research source is strongly urged by instructors in certain courses. Papers and projects must document sources of the information presented and this would include the work of those authors whose writings are used as a resource. The appeal and practicality of the Internet renders it a major learning resource. Students are instructed and encouraged to use it the right way; to respect the copyright laws and to avoid plagiarism when presenting someone else's thoughts, ideas, artwork, or images.

Other learning resources available to students include the many software programs in-house or online, equipment and studios for audio, video, broadcasting, and word processing, and most surely, the availability of instructors, tutors, coaches, and administrative staff that are all in place to facilitate the learning process of each student who attends NESCom. To keep our faculty up to speed with the Learning Resource System, we hold an August In-Service Workshop for all staff and faculty. Often the workshop will focus on the tools available to all instructors in the classroom, and campus-wide. NESCom's Systems Administrator is on call throughout the workweek to assist instructors and train them in the use of learning resources that are computer based. In order to accommodate the computer and equipment needs of students, laboratories and studios are open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. Library hours are as follows: Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

I. Facilities

1. The institution provides and maintains an appropriate learning environment with the necessary supports and technologies sufficient for student achievement of educational objectives. In doing so, industry standards for health, safety and maintenance are followed.

NESCom BSEP classes would be taught in standard classrooms and computer laboratories in the Wildey Communications Center (“WCC”) and elsewhere on campus. The layout for the WCC and the Husson University Campus are found in Attachment N. The consortium agreement between NESCom and Husson for the shared use of the campus generally is found in Attachments O. Within the WCC, NESCom maintains approximately 114 Apple computers for instruction and student use. When school is in session the WCC is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.

The addendum to the consortium agreement dated January 21, 2009 provides (Attachment P) with its parent organization, Husson University, for the shared use of the campus’ theater complex, known as “The Gracie”. Completed in the fall of 2008, The Gracie is a fully functional performance space and serves as a practical experience platform for NESCom. This facility contains a 500-seat theatre with integrated audio and video suites, stage house, full fly system, lighting control system, and audio equipment. (Please see Attachment Q for the equipment list). Adjacent to the stage are load-in facilities, scene shop, dressing rooms and rehearsal hall. (Please see Attachment R for the design of the theater space).

The Gracie provides students with the practical experience to learn about event sound, lighting, set construction, special effects and venue management. It gives students the opportunity to perform in and to support various types of performances. The facility has been audited by the State’s Workplace Safety and Health Division (See Attachment U) and found to be in “good condition”. As part of the BSEP program, students would be required to take the course in “Worksite, Rigging & Electrical Safety” (COM 118). One of the outcomes of COM 118 is for each student to earn an OSHA 10-hour card. Students, faculty and outside providers maintain the facility and its systems.

J. Financial Resources

1. The application for establishing of a new degree-granting program documents a complete and realistic plan for implementing and financing the proposed academic program during the first five-year cycle of operation. The Five Year Financial Plan is based on reasonably projected enrollment levels; the nature and extent of instructional services required; the availability of existing resources to support the program; additional resource requirements; and projected/committed sources of funding.

Attachment S includes NESCom's five-year plan for implementing and financing the proposed program for the BSEP. The format of the analysis examines NESCom's current program (Attachment S, pages 4 and 5) the proposed BSEP program (Attachment S, pages 2 and 3), and then combines them (Attachment S, page 1). The Five Year Financial Plan uses as its baseline, the projected current fiscal year end (2009-10) and the approved budget for the next fiscal year (2010-11). The Plan then extends over the subsequent five fiscal years through 2015-2016.² The Five Year Financial Plan demonstrates that this program, with a modest number of students, can be self-sustaining from the first year. The theater (known as "The Gracie") where much of the instruction will take place has been built and is a shared facility of Husson University and NESCom. Other NESCom concentrations (video production and live sound) currently schedule classes and events in The Gracie. The addition of Entertainment Production would not increase NESCom's capital contribution to the Gracie.

Two of the instructors who would deliver the initial courses are part of our current faculty and their courses and costs would be reassigned to the BSEP program without a net impact on NESCom's financial picture. As a result, the operating costs for Entertainment Production would not exceed the projected revenue derived from additional students. In fact, the net effect of this additional degree program is to increase NESCom's margin and improve its cash flow almost from the start.

a. Projected Enrollment Levels

² In the attached projections, we have incorporated assumptions regarding future revenues and expenses. On the expense side, wages were projected to increase by 3% per year and benefits (which includes health insurance) were projected to increase 25% per year. On the revenue side, tuition was projected to increase by 4.2% per year. The rate of tuition increase that is likely to be higher than the rate of inflation is based on our belief that NESCom tuition is underpriced in comparison to comparable programs and should be brought in line with the tuition rates charged by our parent organization, Husson University

We believe the enrollment levels projected for the BSEP are reasonable, realistic and achievable. There is significant interest within NESCom's current student body in the courses currently offered that would become part of the of the BSEP curriculum. Students and prospects have expressed interest in this type of program. The first enrollment of twenty (20) students is projected for the fall of 2011.³ These twenty students would be a combination of freshmen, transfers from other schools and a handful of NESCom students who may switch to this program. Currently NESCom admits about 180 freshmen each year. Recruiting and admitting fifteen to twenty additional enrollees for the program's first year is within the capability of our current admissions resources. The new program would not require additional visits to high schools. The addition of information to the NESCom website and in our publications would not generate significant work or expense. The Gracie Theater is

open and operating and attracts significant prospect interest in our campus tours. Our admissions and financial aid offices are staffed and supported with proper personnel and systems to handle this small influx of activity. The projections for the subsequent years are conservative with net gains in enrollment averaging fewer than 10 per year as the program becomes populated over the five-year period. In the five-year projection, the total enrollment estimate reaches 45 students. If we exceed 45 students, the financials improve. We have not tested the upper limits of enrollment, but we have determined that a doubling of enrollment to 90, would further improve the margins of the program and of NESCom. Please see attachment S, pages 4 and 5, last column.

b. Projected Instructional Services

Two of the instructors for BSEP are currently members of the NESCom's full time faculty. For purposes of attached projections, the cost of their instructional services has been reallocated to the new program beginning in 2011-2012. In the third year (2011-2012) the projection adds another full time faculty and 3-4 courses per year taught by adjunct(s). In 2013-14, another full time faculty is added, as well as adjunct instruction for 5-6 courses. Given that the number of students projected at this time is 35, four full time faculty with 5-6 courses taught by adjuncts is more than enough technical curriculum to cover the program's enrollment. Faculty in NESCom's other programs, for the most part, would teach elective and General Education courses. The appropriate scheduling of students from BSEP into our General Education and technical education courses in other concentrations would not overburden our present faculty or class sizes. Nonetheless, for these projections we have projected modest growth of full time and adjunct faculty in other areas.

c. Availability of Existing Resources

³ We believe that the fall of 2011 is a reasonable prediction for the opening of the BSEP program. This should provide sufficient time for consideration of degree-granting authority and accreditation for this program. Campus facilities already are in place for the BSEP program. There are an adequate number of standard classroom on campus to accommodate the additional courses to be taught. There is no need to renovate or construct classroom space for this program. The Gracie Theater was completed in the summer of 2009 and it has space and time available for the BSEP program. Our projections show that two Entertainment Production courses will be added to the curriculum each semester until the cumulative total reaches eight BSEP courses per semester. Six of the eight would be taught within the theater complex. The stage platform, scene shop, stage lighting system and sound systems are equipped for the program.

d. Additional Resource Requirements

The financial projections schedule modest capital investment in the BSEP program of \$25,000 starting in academic year 2011-2012 and growing to \$64,000 in 2015-

2016. This investment is likely to be in the scene shop, in the fly system and for stage lighting allowing for the addition, upgrade and replacement of the Gracie's equipment inventory.

e. Projected/Committed Sources of Funding

The anticipated net revenue from the addition of the BSEP enhances NESCom's financial performance. NESCom would not rely on fundraising or borrowing to finance the start-up of the BSEP program. NESCom would use the revenue flow from the tuition and fees of the additional students to fund this program. If we should fall short of our projections, there is adequate excess revenue from the remainder of NESCom programs to make up the difference. In each of the first five years, the total expense of the BSEP program represents half or less of the projected net surplus (For example, the Operating Expense for BSEP in 2011-12 is \$194,000. The projected net surplus in this year for NESCom before inclusion of BSEP, is \$479,000). As a percentage of NESCom's total revenues (without BSEP revenues), the BSEP expenses would be 3% or less. Thus, the magnitude of the financial impact on NESCom as the result of an unanticipated failure of BSEP, is small in comparison to our overall financial strength.⁴

2. The application from an existing degree-granting institution clearly documents that it has the financial resources necessary to support its purposes, implement its program and maintain its continuity for a minimum of five years by providing its most recent audited financial statement and that evidence exists of long-range financial planning and viability.

For the past 5 years, NESCom has enjoyed a cumulative year-end margin of \$2,933,169, has built its cash reserves from \$520,502 to \$1,481,965 (\$800,000 of ⁴ These numbers do not include the potential transfer of The Boat School from Husson University, which recently has been pooled with those of Husson University for investment) and has not needed to borrow in order to meet operating expenses. Our most recent audited financial statements are attached as Attachment T. We believe that these resources and track record of responsible financial stewardship afford NESCom the strength to pursue the proposed degree in Entertainment Production. Entertainment Production is a logical choice for NESCom as it fits well with the school's current culture, has the ability to stand on its own financially, and in large part, utilizes current resources.